

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2003

November 9, 2009

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing to ask you to investigate the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) practices regarding the Tri-State Oversight Committee's monitoring of safety procedures.

I am concerned by the Committee's claim that safety monitors are not being granted access to WMATA subway tracks in order to determine if the tracks are safe for its employees and whether the system is in compliance with safety requirements.

The tragic Metro collision in July 2009 highlighted the need to take immediate steps to prevent future deadly accidents here in our nation's capital and across the nation. That's why following the crash I introduced the National Metro Safety Act. The bill is common sense legislation that grants the Secretary of Transportation the authority to implement and enforce national safety standards for all metro systems. This legislation would change the practice that forces transit systems to be in charge of policing their own safety policies and standards.

However, once these standards are in place, we will need to stand sentry to ensure they are enforced. You must ensure that WMATA allows independent monitors to observe safety procedures so that it may be determined whether the system is running safely and within established safety guidelines.

Time after time we hear about safety practices at Metro that give us pause. Metro has to do its utmost to protect the safety of its riders and employees. Anything less is unacceptable. If Metro is found to be out of compliance and does not allow monitors to observe Metro safety procedures while its trains are in normal service, then rest assured I will be looking at how WMATA uses its federal funding.

Thank you for responding to my request. I look forward to learning your findings.

Sincerely,

